

Bocephus Und Ed The Band, The Legend

A sea of round tables with psychedelic chairs float on a blue pile carpet. There is a breathtaking view of the parking lot. The sounds of a Hoover vacuum blend with the blaring Grateful Dead. This is “the J”: the cafeteria for the Residence Halls on the campus of Humboldt State University and the second home to Matt, when he is not practicing or playing a gig with his band, Bocephus Und Ed. Matt works here in the cafeteria and has done so for as long as he has lived in Humboldt County—six years now.

This night, Matt can hardly talk over the sound of Jerry Garcia, but he finds it a challenge and recounts the history of his music and of the formation and continual evolution of Bocephus Und Ed.

“I picked up a guitar one day and decided that I wanted to play music, but I found music was too hard. I wanted to write lyrics that were poetry, but writing poetry is too hard as well. What wasn’t hard was writing songs with words that rhyme. Out of this simplicity evolved the penis theme for the band. We think of the penis as a useless awkward appendage, and that is how the band functions in society, as a useless awkward appendage.”

The band has a variety of songs. Many of the songs deal with dorm life, Humboldt County life, loggers, beer, various parts of the male anatomy, and of course, love relationships.

“I get a lot of material when I date. I’m not dating now, so I’m a little dry,” he says.

His musical influences are as varied as his songs, “Anybody with less than two chords, Barry Manilow, Elvis: especially “Hunk a Hunk a Burnin’ Love,” David Hasslehoff has given all of us who have no skill hope because he’s a hit in Germany, oh and he’s cute. Finally, Tiffany.” They have done covers of songs ranging from Tom Petty to Guns N Roses. They have redone songs as diverse as “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” to even doing a cover of a tune from the Walt Disney Movie, *The Little Mermaid*. Also one of their crowning achievements is when they combine two forms of art, like when they set the Robert Browning poem, “Porphyria’s Lover” to the tune of “Louie Louie.” “We’re working on a new combination now. Kinda Green Day meets John Denver sort of a thing.”

“This band has never played off campus and the members change virtually after every show. Bocephus Und Ed is like a YMCA retreat; we recruit members and tell them we have a point, they do a show, find out we don’t have a point and leave.”

Bocephus Und Chad (the original name of the band when they formed in 1990) consisted of two members. “Chad” was Brian, who left the band two years ago. The combo played limitedly in Arcata and, for example, was even the feature attraction at the midnight movies on night at the Arcata Theater. Bocephus Und Chad was also the first to give free concerts in “the J.” Nowadays the band uses audience grabbing techniques in their free concerts like having a male exploitation segment in every show. One of the members dresses up in heart printed boxer shorts and wears a sign that says “Male Sex

Symbol.” “We boast we are the only band with a sex symbol solo, kazoo solo, and tap dance solo.”

Now that the band is Bocephus Und Ed, the number of people involved is different so often that one loses count. The band, at the time I talked to Matt, was up to ten members. Each member (outside of Matt, who has always been Bocephus) has stage names that utilize the word “ED.”

“There is Stone-ed, Anebriet-ed, Entao-ed, Physical-ed, Hang-ed (who is the sex object), Adopt-ed, Lubricat-ed, F@#k-ed, and whoever pushes the button on the electronic drum machine becomes Replacement-ed.”

Matt and Bocephus Und Ed have definitely filled a niche in Humboldt State dorm life. He told the Arcata Union in March of 1994, “We pride ourselves on being one of the only bands that’s less talented than the audience.” But they are important, perhaps, because they sing boldly about what everyone is thinking, but no one is saying. They give voice to the concerns of a population, make us laugh, and give the audience a license to be silly.